SEBI on October 31, 2008 has revised the framework for the SLB Scheme pursuant to feedback from market participants. The revision in framework for SLB Scheme *Inter alia* include increased timings for lending and borrowing, increased borrowing tenure, revision in margin methodology and handling of corporate action. NSE has reported that revising required considerable system changes to the existing set-up of SLB Scheme at NSE which has been done. It has been decided to implement the revised framework. Currently, index futures, index options, stock futures and stock options are available for trading in the equity derivatives market. The current regulatory framework envisages cash settlement of all derivative contracts. As reported by NSE, there has been no issue faced with respect to settlement of cash settled derivatives contracts till date.

(d) For the past six months, on an average, Nifty futures constituted around 32% and Nifty options around 35% of the total trading volumes in derivatives. NSE has taken various measures to deepen the capital market in the country including conducting investor awareness and education programs across the country, increased reach of participants by facilitating trading from locations across the country, updated its website providing detailed information, providing trade verification by clients through its website etc.

Strengthening of the micro-finance sector

2390. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission in a report on strengthening the micro finance sector has pointed out that there is an urgent need for the Centre to come out with a national policy on micro-finance with a view to financially empower Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and reduce overall poverty in the country and evolve a coordinated strategy for a faster and smoother growth of the sector;

(b) if so, whether Government has considered the panel report recommendations; and

(c) if so, by when final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The Report of the Steering Committee on Microfinance and Poverty Alleviation (May 2007), constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri Anwarul Hoda, Member, Planning Commission, recommended the need for a concerted effort on the part of the various agencies and the service providers involved in the sector of microfinance to come together to evolve a coordinated strategy for a faster and smoother growth of the sector.

The Government has already taken a number of steps for financial empowerment of Below Poverty Line farmers and other poor people. The constitution of the Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) for meeting the cost of promotional and developmental interventions and the Financial Inclusion Technology Fund (FITF) for meeting the cost of technology adoption, with an overall corpus of Rs. 500 crore each, are steps in that direction.

Further, the Government, in recent years, have also initiated several measures in consultation with Reserve Bank of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for financial empowerment of poor people. Banks have been instructed to achieve financial outreach through opening of "No Frills" accounts with limited overdraft facilities, to extend financial outreach by utilizing services of Civil Society Organisation like Farmers Clubs, NGOs, Post Offices on the lines of Business Facilitator/Business Correspondent Model and to finance oral lessees and landless agricultural labourers through the Self Help Group and Joint Liability Group approach, etc.

Besides, pursuant to the announcement in the Union Budget 2008-09, while Indian Banks Association and NABARD have advised the Scheduled Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks to achieve the target of adding 250 rural household accounts during this year, fresh guidelines have been issued by RBI for appointment of individuals e.g. retired bank officers, ex-servicemen, etc. as Business Correspondents.

Funding of food processing industry by NABARD

†2391. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has made an additional allocation of Rs. 1000 to be disbursed through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for the development and expansion of Food Processing Industry in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any directions have been issued for disbursement of the amount; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir. However, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been making annual allocation of Rs. 1,000 crore in its refinance budget since 2006-07 for Agro Processing from its own resources.

(b) to (d) Do not arise. However, NABARD has its own policy for disbursement of amount as it treats Agro Processing/Food Processing as a thrust area. NABARD extends refinance facilities from its own funds to Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Credit Institutions for supplementing their resources for lending to agro processing along with many other agriculture purposes and Non Farm Sector activities in rural areas. The refinance for agro processing is available at 100% of their lending. Besides, NABARD has also introduced 'direct financing by way of co-financing' for activities of agriculture and rural development. During the course of review meetings with banks, NABARD pursues with them about the progress of disbursements under Agro Processing/Food Processing Sector.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.